



**Sylvia Ford M.A.**

*Early Childhood  
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education, advice and support for parents  
and teachers of young children

## **Kindergarten Readiness**

- 1. The Building Blocks of Readiness**
- 2. The Difference Between Preschool and Kindergarten**
- 3. Qualities of a Good Kindergarten**
- 4. Considerations for Kindergarten Readiness**
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### **1. The Difference Between Preschool and Kindergarten**

Kindergarten follows a more regulated agenda than most preschools. The child is not as free to do what she/he wants, when she/he wants.

Kindergarten teachers cannot spend as much time with each child as a preschool teacher can due to the larger class size. For example, a preschool class may have 3 teachers and 30 children while a kindergarten class may have twenty or 30 to 1 teacher.

Parents of kindergarteners may not have the daily contact/conversation concerning their child with the kindergarten teacher as they did with their child's preschool teacher.

Kindergarten may offer activities similar to preschool, but with more structured expectations as to how they will be carried out.

Kindergarten students are expected to conform more to standards of school behavior. A child must be more self-disciplined.

While preschool provides many opportunities for the child to discover and explore, kindergarten begins in earnest the task of teaching students reading, writing, and mathematics.



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## **2. Qualities of a Good Kindergarten**

The environment has structure, but is flexible and allows for physical movement.

Children have choices of activities.

Teachers work with children one on one, in small groups and with the whole group.

Teachers adapt to the skill level and individual needs of each child.

The classroom is filled with engaging, hands on activities and is decorated with children's art work.

The curriculum is integrated across subjects and areas of development.

Children have opportunities to work uninterrupted for sustained periods of time.

Children play outside everyday.

Children feel respected, safe, and at home.

The classroom has a focus on social-emotional development; teachers model and reinforce self-control, social skills, and cooperative learning.

School and classroom culture encourages parent participation and communication

Class size is reasonable (15-18 teacher with one teacher; no more than 25 with two teachers).



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### **3. Considerations for Kindergarten Readiness**

#### **Social-emotional development**

- Self management skills, self directed
- Communication skills
- Ability to work independently and follow basic instructions
- Self-confidence
- Ability to take turns
- Ability to negotiate and resolve most issues
- Shows curiosity and willingness to try new things
- Self-control adequate to handle typical disappointments
- Ability to pay attention to adult directed activities
- Can ask for a tissue and wipe own nose
- Can dress/undress self (zippers, buttons) and use toilet by self
- Can say first and last name
- Knows phone number and address
- Knows parents first and last names
- Can speak in a voice loud enough for others to hear

#### **Fine and gross motor skills**

- Willingness to use pencil, markers and crayons
- Can use scissors well
- Some ability to write letters
- Awareness of physical space and boundaries
- Engages in sufficient physical play for large muscle development

#### **Language**

- Listens to and enjoys telling stories
- Speaks understandably and in complete sentences
- Recognize some letters
- Recites songs and stories
- Recognizes own name in print
- Can write own name

#### **Mathematical awareness**

- Recognizes basic shapes, colors, and numbers to ten
- Can count to 10
- Counts and points to one to one correspondence
- Able to sort and classify
- Builds with manipulatives (blocks, legos etc.)



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#### **4. Use the Summer to Get Ready**

Set up your child's annual physicals before the doctor becomes booked-up.

Take your child to the school, walking or driving the actual route she he will take everyday.

Visit the school several times before your child starts. An all school open-house will take place in the spring and most schools have some orientation for incoming kindergarten children.

Try to meet the teacher ahead of time or at least know her/his name.

Go to the kindergarten playground and let your child use the equipment there.

Discuss attending kindergarten with your child. Be cheerful, positive, and confident.

Select some special items to purchase that will be just for school, such as a backpack, lunch bag, writing tools etc.

Have your child begin the school schedule about a month before school begins, allowing enough time to eat breakfast each morning.

Summer camp for meeting the kids that will be in kindergarten that fall.

Clean out child's closet and get things organized.

#### **About my professional background, from Sylvia Ford:**

I began my career helping young children and families in 1980 as a preschool teacher. After earning my Master's Degree in Education from SFSU I shifted my focus and started teaching adults about young children. During the last 13 years I have been teaching community college courses to preschool teachers at Skyline College in San Bruno. In my role as a consultant I conduct observations of young children who are having difficulty, talk with parents one on one regarding many different needs, facilitate professional development seminars for preschool teachers, and public speaking events for parents on a variety of child-related topics.

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